You are Rama, I am Rama - Everything is Rama.

Different types of people come to Shri Maharaj with different motives. Shri Maharaj usually asks a new visitor to tell him something about himself - his family background, his business or profession, the length of period he has been interested in spiritual matters, the kind of Saadhana he has done, the specific reason for his visiting Shri Maharaj etc. Shri Maharaj's intention obviously is to find out in what way and by what approach he could help each visitor personally, and at the same time ensure that the dialogue also helps the other visitors.

Quite a few of the visitors briefly give the required facts about themselves and also say quite openly and sincerely that they had read "I Am That" and ever since then they had wanted to sit at Shri Maharaj's feet, that they did not have any specific questions to ask just then but that they would be grateful if they could sit there quietly and listen to whatever Shri Maharaj had to say. In such cases Shri Maharaj would smile and nod. If anyone wanted to ask specific questions Shri Maharaj would ask him to sit closer to him so that the dialogue could be more easily managed. Those who had no questions were asked to sit further back.

One morning, when the session was about to begin, two middle aged gentlemen walked in, paid their respects to Shri Maharaj and sat down. It seemed that they were expected. One of them told Shri Maharaj that he was a Senior Government Official and confessed that he had no interest in spiritual matters and had come there only to introduce his brother who was interested; he soon bid Shri Maharaj good-bye and left.

Then the brother took over, and explained to Shri Maharaj (a) that he has had a Guru for many years, although the latter had shed his mortal coil some time ago; (b) that his Guru had given him Narada Mantra with

the advice that repeating the mantra as often as possible was the best Saadhana - and he was following his Guru's advice; that he had reached a stage now where he considered that everything was Rama and Rama was in everything; and finally that he had attained wonderful peace and comfort by this method. All this was stated as if the visitor was expounding his philosophy for the benefit of Shri Maharaj and all others; he was anxiously looking around to assure himself that all were listening to him and were duly impressed.

Shri Maharaj was listening to this very patiently, and when the visitor completed his statement and sat with his eyes closed and a benign smile on his lips, Shri Maharaj asked the visitor in what way he could help him. The visitor spread out his palms and said that he wanted nothing from anybody, and had come to see Shri Maharaj because several people had pressed him to call on Shri Maharaj and listen to the discourses at least once - and here he was! At this juncture, Shri Maharaj asked the visitor the end purpose of his Saadhana: what did he hope to achieve, if anything?

Visitor: When I sit in meditation, I sometimes get lovely visions of my beloved Shri Rama, and I am engulfed in peace and happiness.

Shri M.: And when you are not in meditation?

Visitor: I think of and see Rama in everyone and everything.

Shri M.: What do you mean by "Rama"?

Visitor: I don't understand the question: Rama is Rama.

Shri M.: When you see Rama in me, and Rama in a dog, and Rama in a flower, what exactly do you mean by Rama? and how exactly do you see Rama: in his traditional pose with a long bow in his powerful arm?

Visitor (rather confused) - Yes, I think so.

Shri M.: and the peace and happiness that you feel when you sit in meditation and sometimes get a

vision of Rama, would it be something like the peace and happiness one would feel when, after a long and hard walk in scorching sun, one is able to rest under the shade of a spreading tree and a good breeze is blowing?

Visitor: You cannot really compare the two because one is physical and the other is, er, I would say, mental or psychic.

Shri M.: In any case, would your Saadhana enable you to have a clear understanding of your true nature?

Visitor: What is the use of such a discussion? Rama is Rama, a God, and I am only a poor human being who has surrendered himself to Rama.

Shri M.: Surrender is a very good and effective Saadhana by itself. But you must very clearly understand what 'Surrender' really means. But that is a separate matter by itself. Are you aware that Rama — though a Prince — himself was only a poor human being, who did not become a God until he was duly instructed in spiritual matters by the Sage Vasishtha? and what was the teaching which Sage Vasishtha imparted to the young Prince? Was it not Atma-Jnyaana, the Knowledge of the Self.

I would suggest that you throw away all the concepts you have collected over the years, and begin with your own self. Think along these lines: What is my true nature? What is the only 'capital' I am born with, and which has remained faithful and unchanged, with me from the moment I have come to know that I exist? How did I acquire this body constituted with the Praana (the vital force) and the consciousness which gives me the sense of being alive? How long will all this last? What was 'I' before this body came into being, and what will 'I' be after this body 'dies'? Who is really 'born' and who will 'die'? What am I?

By this time, the visitor had realised that something was very wrong in the Saadhana as he had practised it: without giving serious thought to the ultimate aim of spiritual enquiry. He gave up his pose of an ~~self-realised~~ enlightened person, and very humbly requested Shri Maharaj for permission to visit him for the remaining few days he would be in Bombay. Shri Maharaj lovingly told him that the sincerity and keenness of his desire to visit him was all the permission that was needed!